

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - SECTION 40101(d)
PREVENTING OUTAGES AND ENHANCING THE RESILIENCE OF THE ELECTRIC GRID

State of Connecticut
Program Narrative

April 6, 2023

1. Objectives and Metrics

As stated in the Administrative and Legal Requirements Document (ALRD), the objective of the Grid Resilience Grant Program (Grant Program) is to improve the resilience of the electric grid against disruptive events. Resilience is defined in Connecticut statute as “the ability to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions and withstand and recover rapidly from deliberate attacks, accidents or naturally occurring threats or incidents, including, but not limited to, threats or incidents associated with the impacts of climate change.”¹ Resilience is a key priority in many of Connecticut’s energy supply and energy infrastructure planning processes, and grid resilience efforts are continuing to develop in Connecticut.

- The 2020 Integrated Resources Plan (IRP)² identifies grid security, specifically regarding weather-based and cybersecurity threats and storm resiliency, as a central objective.
- The 2018 Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES)³ included a key strategy to continue to improve grid reliability and resiliency through state and regional efforts, including the deployment of microgrids to support statewide resiliency goals in strategic locations. Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 21-3 further directs DEEP to identify strategies to improve resilience of energy systems in the 2022 CES.⁴ Other key lenses for the 2022 CES include: (1) equity, including addressing the concern that environmental and economic costs of the state’s energy systems are borne disproportionately by low-income communities and communities of color, and (2) economic development, including focusing on workforce development and job training to grow the green economy in the

¹ <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2020/act/Pa/pdf/2020PA-00005-R00HB-07006SS3-PA.PDF>

² <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Energy/Integrated-Resource-Planning/Integrated-Resource-Planning>

³ <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Energy/Comprehensive-Energy-Plan/Comprehensive-Energy-Strategy>

⁴ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/ConnecticutClimateAction/NML_EO_21-3_-Website_Text Actions.pdf

state as the state decarbonizes and utilizes new and emerging technologies to meet its climate goals. As equity and economic development were identified by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as central objectives of the Grant Program, DEEP will use Grant Program funding to further these lenses from the CES.

- The Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority established specific objectives for its Equitable Modern Grid Framework that are integral to Connecticut's electric grid developments.⁵ These objectives are to support or remove barriers to the growth of Connecticut's green economy; enable a cost-effective, economy-wide transition to a decarbonized future; enhance customers' access to a more resilient, reliable, and secure commodity; and advance the ongoing energy affordability dialogue, particularly in underserved communities.

Several state agencies are working to identify grid resilience investment priorities in Connecticut, including through the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund that is intended to support climate resilience planning at regional, municipal, and neighborhood-level scales, and to support resilience project scoping and development.⁶ As the administering agency of the Grant Program for Connecticut, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) intends to use the Grant Program funding to build upon and expand these efforts in coordination with other state agencies wherever possible. Connecticut's grid resilience investments will strive to meet the Justice40 goal that 40% of the overall benefits of the Grant Program flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. While the definition of these communities may evolve throughout the Grant Program implementation, this Program Narrative uses the term Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) to refer to these communities. DACs will be located and identified using the tools utilized by DOE or other environmental justice mapping tools available in Connecticut and may also include Environmental Justice (EJ) communities as defined in Public Act No. 20-6.⁷

⁵ <https://portal.ct.gov/PURA/Electric/Grid-Modernization/Grid-Modernization>

⁶ <https://portal.ct.gov/ConnecticutClimateAction/Executive-Order/DEEP-Climate-Resilience-Fund>

⁷ Conn P.A. 20-6, [AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCEMENTS TO THE STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LAW](#).

In addition to utilizing Connecticut's iterative energy and resilience planning resources, DEEP intends to use some or all of the following objectives to guide Connecticut's resilience investment decisions under the Grid Resilience Grant Program. These objectives are provisional, pending further discussion and consideration by DEEP. The associated metrics for each objective may be refined in any Request for Proposals (RFP) used to solicit projects for subawards. Further, project reporting metrics for individual subaward projects will be developed as projects are selected in support of the final overall objectives.

Objective 1: Support the efficient and reliable integration of variable and distributed energy resources needed to meet the state's zero carbon electric sector goal and avoid fossil peaking generation.

Public Act 22-5, *An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation*, requires Connecticut to supply 100% of its electricity from zero carbon resources by 2040.⁸ Distributed generation (DG) resources, such as solar, energy storage, and fuel cells, that are powered by zero emission fuel will play a significant role in Connecticut's zero carbon electric sector future by providing grid resilience, risk mitigation through portfolio diversification, equity, environmental, and workforce development benefits. Connecticut's resilience investment decisions will support the deployment of a range of these resources to meet its zero carbon goal. Associated metrics to measure outcomes related to this objective may include:

- the number and costs of DG resources,
- the capacity and energy generated and/or saved by these resources, especially during periods of high use,
- the avoided carbon and other environmental pollution, and
- the resilience attributes of these resources, such as whether generation resources are paired with storage, whether the resources can disconnect from the grid,

⁸ Conn. P. A. No. 22-5. AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION. <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2022/act/pa/pdf/2022PA-00005-R00SB-00010-PA.pdf>.

whether these resources are deployed at facilities lacking emergency backup generation or with emergency backup generation nearly the end of its useful life, and the type of facilities or communities served by the deployment of DG resources.

Objective 2: Improve system reliability and resilience in a range of weather and storm conditions and improve overall grid flexibility while maximizing Community Benefits.

The Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) in Docket No. 17-12-03RE08 identified improvements for adapting to any system and customer vulnerabilities to climate change.⁹ For the purpose of this Grant Program, DEEP defines Community Benefits as providing quantifiable and/or tangible benefits relating to reducing the likelihood and duration of occurrences of disruptive events. An increasing risk of damage from storms means that Connecticut must continuously evaluate new and existing resilience measures that can protect the grid and the reliable delivery of electricity. Connecticut's grid resilience investments will focus on measures with the highest expected impact for reducing the frequency and duration of disruptive events. Associated metrics to measure outcomes related to this objective may include:

- the number of projects and costs of the program,
- the types of projects supported by the program,
- the number of communities and customers the program serves,
- the energy, environmental, resilience, equity, and workforce development benefits of the program,
- the dollar benefits and benefit-cost ratio for the program,
- the rate and bill impacts of program costs not covered by grant funding, for an average Residential, Low Income, and Commercial & Industrial customer, and
- the baseline and projected improvement in key resilience metrics (such as System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI), System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI), Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI), All In SAIDI, All In SAIFI, Major Event Only SAIDI, and Major Event Only SAIFI).

⁹ PURA Investigation into Distribution System Planning of the Electric Distribution Companies – Resilience and Reliability Standards and Programs [[17-12-03RE08](#)].

Any RFP issued to solicit projects under this Grant Program will require proposals to include a detailed Community Benefits Plan addressing how the project may achieve the environmental, resilience, equity, and workforce development objectives.

Objective 3: Maximize the benefits and limit the adverse impacts of grid resilience investments for DACs.

Connecticut will prioritize resilience investments that: 1) advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) through project development; and (2) are consistent with principles of energy justice and the Justice40 Initiative.¹⁰ Connecticut will aim for resilience investments that minimize total system costs for the benefit of all customers, with a particular focus on delivering economic benefits to DAC communities. Associated metrics to measure outcomes related to this objective may include:

- the number and proportion of projects serving DACs,
- the cost and proportion of cost for projects serving DACs,
- the benefits and proportion of benefits for projects serving DACs, and
- the extent to which projects received and incorporated input from the communities, including DACs.

Objective 4: Fund projects that use strong labor standards and protections and strategize to attract, train, and retain an appropriately skilled and local workforce, especially from DAC communities.

DEEP anticipates that the implementation of resilience projects under this Grant Program may create new opportunities for the state's workforce. Associated metrics to measure outcomes related to this objective may include:

- the number of good-paying jobs created, including those with the free and fair choice to join a union and the proportion of those jobs that are in-state and in DACs,
- the amount and proportion of costs to contracts with businesses operating in-state and in DACs, and

¹⁰ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>

- the number and proportion of apprenticeship and vocational training programs developed in-state and in DACs.

2. Criteria

For the first two program years, DEEP intends to use a competitive project solicitation process through an RFP to select projects that deliver on the objectives described in Section I and provide direct benefits to Connecticut communities. Should DEEP not make any subawards through the RFP process, DEEP may evaluate options for direct awards such as funding grid resilience measures in infrastructure projects identified through other resilience planning efforts. DEEP will ensure that the percentage of funds made available to eligible entities that sell not more than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year (herein referred to as Small Utilities) is not less than the percentage of all customers in Connecticut served by those eligible entities, discussed further in Section 4. In evaluating project proposals, priority will be given to projects that will generate the greatest Community Benefit in reducing the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events and reducing energy burden, further quantified in the below selection criteria. DEEP intends to use the following criteria for selection of subawards to Eligible Entities when utilizing a competitive solicitation process through an RFP. These criteria are provisional, pending further discussion and consideration by DEEP.

- i. The thoroughness of the response to all the proposal requirements outlined in the RFP that will be issued by DEEP for project solicitation, including identification of the program objectives that are met by the proposed project and reporting on the extent to which the project meets the objectives as measured by the associated metrics.
- ii. The extent to which the proposal provides Community Benefit(s) as defined in Section 1 and whether the proposal provides direct benefits to a DAC or EJ community.¹¹ In the assessment of Community Benefit(s), DEEP will determine if a proposed project prioritizes either low-income customers or residents of an EJ community. Subaward project proposals must include a Community Benefits Plan that addresses how the project: (1)

¹¹ <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Environmental-Justice/Environmental-Justice-Communities>

supports meaningful community and labor engagement; (2) invests in the American workforce; (3) advances diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and (4) contributes to the goal that 40% of the overall benefits flow to disadvantaged communities in alignment with the Justice40 Initiative.

- iii. The extent to which the proposal is affordable and cost-effective, including consideration of other funding sources and evaluation of benefits including reduced energy burden, enhanced resilience, furtherance of climate goals, improvements to equity, and creation of workforce opportunities.
- iv. The extent of project readiness, with preference given to projects that can begin construction sooner compared to others or projects that have already demonstrated outreach to the impacted communities (especially DACs) and incorporated their input. Project readiness evaluation may include projects that have been fully scoped and planned prior to the submission of a response to the RFP or projects that have begun development but are lacking adequate funding sources to complete the project for reasons deemed acceptable by DEEP.

3. Methods

DEEP intends to select subawards through a competitive proposal review process based upon the selection criteria detailed above to select subaward projects for the combined Year 1 and 2 allocations. DEEP will issue an initial project solicitation through an RFP following the approval of this application and aim to select projects for the first two years of Grant Program funding by the fall of 2023. In future program years, DEEP may issue additional RFP(s) or may subaward Grant Program funding directly to projects that have been identified through ongoing resilience planning efforts in Connecticut. DEEP may seek to leverage the Grant Program funding to include grid resilience measures in these projects or enhance the infrastructure at existing microgrids.

DEEP will ensure that the identified Small Utilities in Connecticut are contacted directly with information about the RFP to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to submit project proposals. Proposals from Small Utilities will be evaluated as a separate pool of proposals

with funds awarded until the Small Utilities set aside is allocated; any remaining proposals from Small Utilities will then be evaluated with all other received proposals. If there are insufficient proposals from Small Utilities to utilize the set aside, that funding will be reallocated to the remaining pool. DEEP anticipates providing a metrics tracking spreadsheet to assess the impact and progress of each subaward project that aligns with the stated Grant Program objectives. As project managers must provide quarterly status reports to the Grant Program administrator under the DOE reporting requirements, DEEP will include a metrics tracking spreadsheet template for project managers to submit in each report and publicly post a summary of the achieved objectives as each project reaches these milestones on the DEEP website.

4. Funding Distribution

As DEEP intends to solicit project proposals through a competitive process for the first two program years' allocation, the exact distributions and categories of recipients of the subawards is unknown aside from the Small Utilities set aside. There are eight Small Utilities in Connecticut providing service to a total of approximately 5% of all customers in Connecticut. Accordingly, DEEP will set aside approximately 5% of total Program Funds for Small Utilities in each year. Based on the expected annual allocation amount, each year's Small Utility set aside will be approximately \$155,919.¹² If DEEP does not receive project proposals that meet the RFP requirements for proposals from Small Utilities for this amount, those funds will be reallocated to the total pool of Program Funds for Eligible Entities in Connecticut. DEEP has also identified additional entities that do not explicitly appear on the list provided in Section 40101(d) but which DEEP would like to be considered Eligible Entities for receiving subawards. These entities include private developers or operators that provide planning, installation/construction, and management services for energy infrastructure needed for some the resilience measures applicable under this Grant Program. Project types that are eligible for funding can include:

¹² DEEP used data provided by the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative [Annual Report \(2020\)](#) and the [US Energy Information Administration](#) to calculate the total number of electric sector customers in Connecticut and the total number of customers served by the identified Small Utilities. The Small Utilities in Connecticut include: Bozrah Light and Power, Groton Utilities, Jewett City Department of Public Utilities, Norwich Public Utilities, South Norwalk Electric and Water, East Norwalk Third Taxing District, Mohegan Tribal Utility Authority, and Wallingford Public Utilities. The Small Utility set aside was calculated as the percentage of Connecticut customers served by Small Utilities (5%) of an expected \$3,118,384 being available for project awards in Connecticut, which is Connecticut's first Program Year allocation of \$3,282,510 less 5% that will be utilized for project administration and technical assistance.

weatherization technologies and equipment, fire-resistant technologies and fire prevention systems, monitoring and control technologies, the undergrounding of electrical equipment, utility pole management, the relocation of power lines or the reconductoring of power lines with low-sag, advanced conductors, fuel-load management, the use or construction of distributed energy resources for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events (such as microgrids and battery-storage subcomponents), adaptive protection technologies, advanced modeling technologies, hardening of power lines, facilities, substations, of other systems, and replacement of old overhead conductors and underground cables. DEEP does not plan to award grant funds to vegetation management. A subaward to an eligible entity under this grant program may not be used for: construction of a new electric generating facility or large-scale battery-storage facility that is not used for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events or cybersecurity.

5. Equity Approach

I. Quality Jobs

DEEP will ensure that all selected projects meet the existing workforce development and labor standards for energy projects in Connecticut. DEEP will prioritize the quality and manner in which the proposed project: will create or retain high quality, good-paying jobs including those with a free and fair choice to join, form, or assist a union; the extent to which the proposer has a plan to attract, train, and retain skilled workers and partner with community-based, labor, and worker organizations and groups; and the extent to which the project provides workforce opportunities in DACS, low- and moderate-income communities, or communities that have lost jobs due to fossil energy displacement. In reviewing proposals for subawards, DEEP will give priority to projects that include a commitment to taking all reasonable actions to ensure a Community Benefits Agreement is entered into with appropriate community organizations representing residents of the community in which the project is or will be located and appropriate actions to ensure a Workforce Development Program is established, in line with the same

requirement for renewable energy projects with nameplate capacity of five megawatts or more detailed in Connecticut Public Act No. 21-43.¹³

- A "Community Benefits Agreement" means an agreement between a project developer and community-based organizations or a coalition of such organizations, that details the project's contributions to the community in which it is or will be sited and the aspects of the project that will mitigate adverse conditions of such community and create opportunities for local businesses, communities, and workers.
- A "Workforce Development Program" means a program pursuant to which newly hired employees and existing employees are given the opportunity to develop skills that will enable such employees to qualify for higher paying jobs on a covered project. A Workforce Development Program includes apprenticeship training through an apprenticeship program registered with the Labor Department or a federally recognized state apprenticeship agency that complies with the requirements under 29 CFR 29¹⁴ and 29 CFR 30¹⁵, as each may be amended from time to time and pre-apprenticeship training that will enable students to qualify for registered apprenticeship training.

Connecticut workforce stakeholders such as Regional Workforce Boards and community-based organizations have a strong understanding of construction, transportation, and infrastructure workforce needs and are already helping to fill jobs across the state and provide opportunities for marginalized populations. Connecticut's Office of Workforce Strategy recently launched CareerConneCT, a state-sponsored program that has become a single-entry portal for workforce development, with specific consideration for marginalized communities, that can serve as another resource for sharing workforce opportunities related to subawards under this Grant Program.

Additionally, DEEP will require all subawardees to comply with Title 40 of the United States Code, Chapter 31, commonly referred to as the "Davis-Bacon Act" (DBA)¹⁶. All laborers

¹³Conn. P.A. 21-43, [AN ACT CONCERNING A JUST TRANSITION TO CLIMATE-PROTECTIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT](#).

¹⁴eCFR :: 29 CFR Part 29 -- Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs

¹⁵eCFR :: 29 CFR Part 30 -- Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship

¹⁶ Pub. L. No. 107-217, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/dbra.pdf>

and mechanics employed by the subawardees and their subcontractors in the performance of construction, alteration, or repair work on a covered project which has been assisted in whole or in part by funds pursuant to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on similar projects in the locality, as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the DBA. All public infrastructure projects assisted in whole or in part by funds pursuant to the BIL will comply with the Build America, Buy America Act (“the Act”)¹⁷. Where applicable, DEEP will require all subawardees to ensure that any suppliers of iron, steel, manufactured goods, or construction materials can certify, in writing, that their products are manufactured domestically, and otherwise comply with the terms of the Act.

II. Community Benefits

DEEP intends to give priority to projects that would generate the greatest Community Benefit (whether rural or urban) in reducing the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events. As stated in Section 1, DEEP will evaluate the extent of Community Benefit(s) delivered by a proposed project will be measured by the project’s potential to reduce the frequency and duration of disruptive events, reduce carbon and other environmental pollution, improve equity, and foster workforce development to members of the community of which the project is serving. DEEP will use the Community Benefits Plan, required as part of the subaward award application, to assess the Community Benefit(s) potential of a project. DEEP will encourage subaward project proposers to include additional project metrics in their responses to an RFP for this Grant Program to further specify how projects are assessing potential Community Benefit measures, including but not limited to:

- Socioeconomic and other demographic data, including data from the EPA EJSscreen¹⁸ or other tools, of the community where the project will be sited,
- Context for legacy and/or present environmental injustices and how the project may mitigate historic issues in the community where the project will be sited,

¹⁷ Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-117publ58>

¹⁸ [EJSscreen \(epa.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen)

- Meaningful and accessible community engagement as part of the project development, and
- Strategies to prioritize project benefits for communities that are overburdened and vulnerable to disruptive events.

III. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)

DEEP is making concerted efforts to institutionalize DEIA in policy development and program implementation. A recent third-party audit of the agency assessed diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) needs and the results were utilized to prepare a data-based DEI profile of the agency. Since the conclusion of the DEI audit, DEEP has begun implementing required DEI training of agency employees, conducting more outreach to diverse outlets for employment opportunities, and has initiated applying an equity lens to agency communications and engagement materials. DEEP will leverage this ongoing institutional learning to foster an inclusive process in the administration of the Grant Program and aims to continuously engage with resident, worker, and community stakeholders.

Other iterative engagement efforts may include coordination with existing Councils in Connecticut. Governor Lamont established the Connecticut Clean Economy Council (CCEC) under Executive Order 21-3 in recognition of the importance of developing a robust and well-trained workforce equipped with the skills needed to respond to the labor demands of Connecticut's clean economy.¹⁹ The Council's mission is to identify opportunities to leverage state and federal funding to economic development benefits resulting from investments deemed necessary to meet the state's climate, air quality, resiliency, and sustainability goals. The CCEC is also tasked with supporting equitable economic development opportunities for both Small Business Enterprise and Minority Business Enterprise firms and job seekers from Connecticut's black, indigenous, and people of color populations. DEEP may consult the CCEC to help identify investment opportunities for the Program Funding to facilitate the growth and diversification of

¹⁹ <https://portal.ct.gov/ConnecticutClimateAction/Executive-Order/Executive-Order-No-21-3>

the workforce including broadening workforce participation and opportunities for residents in Connecticut's disadvantaged communities.

Executive Order 21-3 also established a Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC) within DEEP. CEEJAC's purpose is to advise the Commissioner of DEEP on current and historic environmental injustice, pollution reduction, energy equity, climate change mitigation and resiliency, health disparities, and racial inequity. DEEP may also consult the CEEJAC to identify strategies to share and maximize the subaward projects' potential benefits and to engage resident, worker, and community leaders on project development and implementation.

6. Technical Assistance and Administration

DEEP intends to utilize up to 5% of the allowable administration costs from the grant funds to contract with a consultant to provide services related to the administration of the Program and to fund some staff working on the program. Consultant services may include developing the RFPs to solicit projects for subawards, assisting DEEP in RFP outreach and the review and evaluation of project proposals to select subaward recipients, providing technical assistance to and assisting with the identification of match funding opportunities from existing programs in Connecticut at the direction of DEEP.

7. Public Notice and Hearing

DEEP issued an initial Notice of Request for Written Comments and Notice of Public Meeting on August 10, 2022, with the intention to solicit public comment on DEEP's policy goals guiding Connecticut's grant application, the proposed process and timing of the structure for project solicitation, the proposed requirements for proposals, and other general comments about the grant award criteria and process. DEEP distributed the Notice to the Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy's central mailing list with over 300 recipients and posted the Notice to DEEP's webpage dedicated to the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.²⁰ DEEP held a

²⁰ <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Business-and-Financial-Assistance/Grants-Financial-Assistance/Implementation-of-the-Federal-Infrastructure-Investment-and-Jobs-Act>

public meeting on August 29, 2022, with 28 registrants from various organizations including Connecticut's two major electric utilities Eversource Energy Service Company and the United Illuminating Company, renewable energy companies, energy consultants, and economic development advocacy groups. A total of 16 registrants attended the meeting. During the meeting, DEEP outlined its proposed policy goals and proposed evaluation criteria for selecting projects for subawards. There were no formal public comments made during the public meeting, and DEEP received three public comments submitted through the Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy email account as requested in the Notice. The comments generally identified potential applications for program funding.

DEEP issued a second Notice of Request for Written Comments and Notice of Public Meeting on February 2, 2023, with the intention to solicit public comment on DEEP's updated approach for the combined Year 1 and Year 2 program funds. DEEP held a second public meeting on February 16, 2023, with 27 registrants from various organizations including advocacy groups, representatives of regional government organizations, the Connecticut Green Bank and energy service providers. A total of 13 registrants attended the meeting. DEEP used this second public meeting to outline the proposed metrics and objectives of the Grant Program and the proposed evaluation criteria for selecting projects for subawards and specified that a competitive project solicitation process will be used for the combined Year 1 and Year 2 funding for subawards. There was one question asked during the meeting regarding the allowable resilience measures under the Grant Program. DEEP also received four public comments submitted through the Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy email account as requested in the Notice. The comments were generally supportive of the proposed objectives and metrics while also offering additional metrics and proposal evaluation criteria for consideration. One commenter requested clarification regarding aspects of the Small Utilities set aside.

DEEP intends to continue to engage stakeholders throughout the Grant Program implementation and project solicitation process by sharing information about RFPs and subaward project milestones through mailing lists, on DEEP's website and social media, and through communication with stakeholders such as Small Utilities, tribal stakeholders, and DACs and EJ communities in Connecticut.